



Department of Justice

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MONDAY, JANUARY 17, 1977

FAREWELL REMARKS

OF

THE HONORABLE EDWARD H. LEVI
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES

BEFORE

THE EMPLOYEES OF THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

3:30 P.M.
MONDAY, JANUARY 17, 1977
THE GREAT HALL
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
WASHINGTON, D.C.

I have asked for this opportunity to speak to you -- just for a very few minutes -- not so much to say goodbye but rather to say thank you -- an official but also a very personal thank you.

When I took the oath of office almost two years ago in this Hall before some of you -- among other things I said was the following:

"The law is a servant of our society. Its enforcement administration can give more effective meaning to our common goals."

Among these common goals are: domestic tranquility, the blessings of liberty, the establishment of justice.

These goals do not bring themselves into being. If we are to have a government of laws and not of men, then it takes particularly dedicated men and women to accomplish this through their zeal and determination, and also their concern for fairness and impartiality.

And I know that this Department always has had such dedicated men and women and I recalled then with great pride the time I spent in this Department.

I said we have lived in a time of change and corrosive skepticism and cynicism concerning the administration of justice. Nothing can more weaken the quality of life or more imperil the realization of the goals we all hold dear than our failure to

make clear by words and deed that our law is not an instrument of partisan purpose, and it is not to be used in ways which are careless of the higher values which are within all of us.

I spoke of the President's high aspirations for the Department, and I said that I was sure that the able men and women of this Department would join with me in responding to these aspirations.

I want now to say thank you for the dedicated service which you have always given and are now giving. I leave confident that the morale and purpose of this Department are high. We have shown that the administration of justice can be fair, can be effective, can be non-partisan.

These are goals which can never be won for all time. They must always be won anew. I know you will be steadfast in your adherence to them.

I want to express my own recognition of my own good fortune in being able to work with a dedicated staff at the Department, and to be joined by others -- who came as I did, like those of you who had stayed through difficult times, to witness to the importance of the work and to those ideals which are indispensable to a democracy built upon the place of law. This is what the President asked of us and this is what we have done.

I cannot say enough to acknowledge my indebtedness to the Deputy Attorney General, the Solicitor General, the Assistant Attorneys General, and to the heads and directors of the Bureaus

and other units and to the United States Attorneys. We have worked together. The accomplishments are many. No area of the Department has failed to advance. In every area of our work the Department has made important proposals; in every area it has implemented and put into place many of them.

Of course problems remain -- that is the life of the law. But we have shown a willingness to confront problems directly, to deal with them as openly as possible, to have placed the administration of justice on a foundation of fairness and not upon favor.

I shall not single out any single unit or bureau. I shall not even here say a special word to my own immediate staff, for I think we have achieved, despite the diversity of our tasks, a common realization of our goals, and of how these goals should be pursued.

The strength of the Department will be in its continuity. The work continues. The leadership of the Department, I am confident, will be in good hands. But each member of the Department, while he is here, is part of that leadership. You will, I know, continue to exemplify those ideals which we have made to work -- ideals of fairness, candor, sensitivity to the needs of the people, a willingness to face hard choices, and non-partisanship.

What you have done deserves not my gratitude (although you have that in full measure) but the gratitude of the American people. We have been engaged in a ministry of justice.

And for this, and for them, I say thank you.